

2020 ANNUAL REPORT
PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF BATON ROUGE / PARISH OF EAST BATON ROUGE



**CITY-PARISH PLANNING COMMISSION
2020 ANNUAL REPORT**

MAYOR-PRESIDENT

Sharon Weston Broome

METROPOLITAN COUNCIL MEMBERS

Scott Wilson, Mayor Pro Tempore

Denise Amoroso

Chauna Banks

LaMont Cole

Donna Collins-Lewis

Jen Racca

Erika L. Green

Dwight Hudson

Chandler Loupe

Matt Watson

Trae Welch

Tara Wicker

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

Rossie Washington, Jr., Chair

Clifford Grout, Vice-Chair

Ulysses Addison

Andy Allen

Donna Collins-Lewis

Jayne C. Ellender

Kelvin Hill

April Hawthorne

Todd Sterling

Mission and Goals

The mission of the East Baton Rouge Parish Planning Commission is to be a driving force supporting the development and implementation of the comprehensive plan, providing guidance for growth, development, and restoration, while recognizing the importance of maintaining healthy, diversified neighborhoods, encouraging increased access to economic opportunity, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents of East Baton Rouge Parish.

2020 Goals

- Apply policies consistently through decision making and actions.
- Treat all applications and individuals fairly and objectively.
- Provide planning services that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Promote the education, awareness and involvement of the citizens in the planning process.
- Guide growth and development to encourage economic vitality and employment opportunities throughout the community without negatively impacting infrastructure, the environment or public services.
- Provide professional development and training for Planning Commission members and staff.



Office of the Planning Commission

City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge
Post Office Box 1471, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821
or
1100 Laurel Street, Suite 104, Baton Rouge, LA 70802
Phone (225) 389-3144 Fax (225) 389-5342

Ryan L. Holcomb, AICP
Planning Director

January 19, 2021

The Honorable Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome, members of the Metropolitan Council, and residents of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish:

On behalf of the Planning Commission, I am providing you with this report on the activities of the Planning Commission during the 2020 calendar year. The retirement of Frank Duke, previous Planning Director in February, followed by an ongoing pandemic, has made this year more challenging than we anticipated. Despite these challenges, the Planning Commission has accomplished several of our goals.

Perhaps the most significant work accomplished was the revisions to the Unified Development Code (UDC). Updating the UDC to reflect the principles of FUTUREBR has been a priority for numerous years, and I am pleased to report that Council adopted the last three chapters, which received a complete re-write to reflect the comprehensive plan.

Updating the UDC and processing development applications is an essential aspect of our work. We also engaged in several other significant initiatives designed to improve the quality of life in East Baton Rouge Parish. These notably included working with Build Baton Rouge on the Plank Road Area Plan, working with the Department of Transportation and Drainage on the stormwater master plan and MovEBR, updating the historic building survey and developing design guidelines for a potential Beauregard Town Local Historic District, and working on the East Baton Rouge Parish Pedestrian-Bike Master Plan which was adopted by Council this year.

I want to thank my staff for pulling together as a team in 2020 to accomplish our goals under challenging circumstances. As Planning Director, I look forward to working collaboratively with the Planning Commission, development community, neighborhood groups, and other stakeholders in the next year.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ryan L. Holcomb".

Ryan L. Holcomb, AICP
Planning Director

Planning Commission



Rossie Washington, Jr.
Chair



Clifford Grout
Vice-Chair



Ulysses Addison

Baton Rouge created its City Planning Commission in 1941 under the provisions of State Act No. 204, written in 1926, and Section 33 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes. In 1949, the City of Baton Rouge combined with the Parish of East Baton Rouge to become one of the United States' first consolidated city and parish governing units; hence the name City-Parish Planning Commission.



Andy Allen



Donna Collins-Lewis
Metro Council
Representative



Jayme C. Ellender

The legislated role of the Planning Commission is "to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality and promote public interest in and understanding of a plan." With this charge, The Commission coordinates the implementation and update of the Comprehensive Plan and also develops zoning and subdivision regulations.



Kelvin Hill
Mayor-President
Representative



April Hawthorne



Todd L. Sterling

The Planning Commission makes recommendations to the Metropolitan Council regarding ordinances, regulations and land use requirements, applying its knowledge and experience to the planning and zoning matters they consider at monthly public hearings.



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January 19, 2021

The Honorable Mayor-President Sharon Weston-Broome, members of the Metropolitan Council, and residents of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish:

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is a seven-member committee established to aid in the preservation and protection of buildings, sites, monuments, structures and areas of historic interest or importance through their designation as historic landmarks or districts. I am providing this annual report on our activities and accomplishments for the year 2020.

Last year, the City-Parish was awarded a grant from the State Historic Preservation Office to develop a historic structure survey and design guidelines for Historic Beauregard Town. In March, City-Parish offices were closed due to the coronavirus pandemic, but staff and consultants continued this work from home in spite of this setback. As of November, those documents were completed and will serve as the building blocks for Beauregard Town to potentially be designated as the City-Parish's third Local Historic District.

The Historic Preservation Commission continued to hold meetings while complying with health experts' safety recommendations. We utilized the Planning Commission's online public comment form and for in-person meetings, we allowed one member of the public to speak at a time, while others sat at a safe distance outside in the Planning Commission lobby.

The HPC issued nine Certificates of Appropriateness for alterations to the exterior of structures visible from the street in our Local Historic Districts. The HPC also reviewed two demolition applications and one local historic designation of the Leo Butler House, for a total of 12 cases.

We continue to observe Historic Preservation Month, sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, during the month of May.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve East Baton Rouge Parish. As members of the HPC, we will continue to promote historic preservation in 2021.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Whitney Hoffman-Sayal".

Whitney Hoffman-Sayal AICP, Chair
Historic Preservation Commission

Committees

Historic Preservation Commission

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was established by the Metropolitan Council in 2004. It is considered a part of the planning functions of City-Parish Government, and is administered by the staff of the Office of the Planning Commission.

In 2020, the HPC processed 12 applications which included Certificates of Appropriateness in Spanish Town and Drehr Place, demolitions within the downtown development character area and local historic landmark designations throughout the parish.

Beauregard Town Survey

One of the biggest accomplishments in 2020 came with the completion of the Beauregard Town Historic District Survey. The survey was a process of gathering information and facts about a community's historic resources. Of the 517 structures surveyed, 90 percent were found to be built more than 50 years ago. Given the fact that structures must be at least 50 years old to be considered for the National Register, this is exciting news. The most common architectural styles in the area are overwhelmingly Queen Anne (52%) and Craftsman (26%). In total, the surveyed area features 38 styles and 38 forms.



The Leo Butler House was designated a local landmark



Staff spent months surveying Beauregard Town. The Kennard-Turnbull house (c. 1824) is the oldest structure in the neighborhood.



Jeff Kuehny, Beauregard Town Civic Association President, speaks to Beauregard Town stakeholders about a potential local historic district. Planning Director Ryan Holcomb and Assistant Planning Director Gilles Morin sit in the center.



2020 HPC Members (from top): Nedra Hains, Byron Washington, Whitney Hoffman-Sayal, Sara Brignac, Uyuho Eduok, and Amy Fransen.
Not Pictured: Markeda Cottonham



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Ryan L. Holcomb, AICP
Planning Director

January 19, 2021

The Honorable Mayor-President Sharon Weston-Broome, the Honorable Scott Wilson, President Pro Tempore, and members of the Metropolitan Council:

The Complete Streets Advisory Committee (CSAC) is a 17-member committee created by the Metropolitan Council to represent a variety of groups with an interest in accommodating all users of the transportation network in Baton Rouge. As outlined in our adopted ordinance, I am providing this annual report and metrics on our activities and accomplishments for the year 2020.

Over the past year our major initiatives have continued to reflect the charge we were given in the Complete Streets Policy – to review and make recommendation on policies and ordinances affecting all modes of transportation. The year began with our committee reviewing the MovEBR Design Guidelines, the East Baton Rouge Pedestrian/Bicycle Master Plan, and the associated Safety Action Plan. Although the COVID 19 pandemic forced our committee to halt all in-person meetings, we have continued to collaborate through virtual platforms.

Members of our committee have contributed to the recently adopted “Shared Mobility Devices” ordinance, advocated for the implementation of the EBR Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan, and identified locations that could be considered for intersection and mid-block crossing treatments.

Our committee strives to reach out to other groups with an interest in complete streets. This year we have received presentations from LSU on their Transportation and Mobility Plan, and from Baton Rouge Green on Street Trees. Our focus for the upcoming year will be to continue building public awareness of complete streets, advancing the EBR Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan and working with the MovEBR program.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve East Baton Rouge Parish.

Sincerely,

Whitney Hoffman Sayal, AICP, Chair
Complete Streets Advisory Committee

Committees Continued

Complete Streets Advisory Committee



CSAC Members: Back Row from left Rex Cabanniss, Mark Martin (Vice Chair), Dennis Mitchell, Second Row Nancy Curry, Whitney Hoffman-Sayal (Chair), Dr. Peter Breaux, Laurence Lambert , Vance Baldwin. Front Row: Tara Wicker, Candace Temple, Dr. Jeanne George, Stephen Kauffman, Eric Dexter, Jared Hymowitz. Not pictured: Ryan Benton, Thomas Bennett and Elizabeth Walker

Policy Implementation

Complete streets are designed for consideration for users of all ages and physical ability and they allow for multiple modes of transportation. Since 2014, the Parish has had a policy in place to begin implementing these concepts into the transportation network. The year this policy was adopted, Smart Growth America recognized Baton Rouge in their "Best of Policies" report as a model for language regarding all users and modes.

Although the Parish still lacks a truly complete street, progress has been made to have elements of complete streets throughout the area. Also the State's road transfer program has enhanced major corridor streets such as Government and Acadian Thruway to incorporate more pedestrian and bicycle facilities. With massive infrastructure projects such as MoveBR, Bus Rapid Transit and the Baton Rouge Lakes Master plan taking hold in the next several years, having a solid complete streets policy in place will prove to be valuable. In 2020, the East Baton Rouge Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan was adopted by council. This years metrics expand on the baselines created in 2019 and are listed on the next page.

ANNUAL REPORT

Goal: Improve Mobility	2019	2020	Source
Decrease number of barriers along sidewalks and intersections	8,651 barriers along 195 miles of streets	No change, many projects are in construction	DTD
Increase miles of			IS, DTD, BREC
bicycle lanes	14.7	15.3*	
multi-use paths	11.23	17.93**	
sidewalks	998	1833***	
Decrease physical obstructions to pedestrians and cyclist such as vegetation and debris	51% of bike lane service calls closed 81% of sidewalk service calls closed	95% of bike lane service calls closed 98% of sidewalk calls closed	311
Increase the percentage of tree canopy along streets	No data available	No data available	
Goal: Safety	2019	2020	Source
Increase percentage of streets meeting IES lighting standards	1.86%	No change, many projects are in construction	DTD
Increase bicycle and pedestrian facilities within 1/4 mile of transit routes	No data available	No data available	
Increase protected railroad crossings and preserve existing	207	207	IS
Decrease bicycle and pedestrian serious injuries	76	41	CRPC
Decrease bicycle and pedestrian fatalities	39	23	
Goal: Access to Education and Employment	2019	2020	Source
Increase on time transit performance	65% on time	69% on time	CATS
Decrease travel times for major origin/destination points to 50 minutes	No data	No data (consider new metric)	CATS
Increase percentage of transit stops that are ADA compliant and feature amenities such as shelters, lighting and maps	100% of transit shelters are ADA compliant no data on stops without shelters	Data still in progress	CATS
Increase availability of first mile/last mile connections	Gotcha bike share launched in 2019 Uber and Lyft launched in 2014, 2016	Electric Scooter Ordinance passed.	CRPC/PC
Goal: Provide Safe Routes for Children	2019	2020	Source
Increase percentage of pedestrian facilities within 1 mile of :			IS
schools	73%	98%	
community centers	66%	66%	
libraries	100%	93%	
parks	96%	96%	
Increase percentage of bicycle facilities within 2 miles of			
schools	77%	93%	
community centers	66%	66%	
libraries	100%	80%	
parks	97%	86%	



* New bike lane miles include East Boulevard.

** New multi-use paths include Levee Path Phase III.

*** New sidewalk miles are better quality aerial photography which is why this number doubled from last year.

PLANNING

Awards, Conferences, and Recognition

Planning Director's Award

Every year, the Planning Director selects one member of staff whose contributions over the prior twelve months have contributed significantly to the success of the Planning Commission's work.

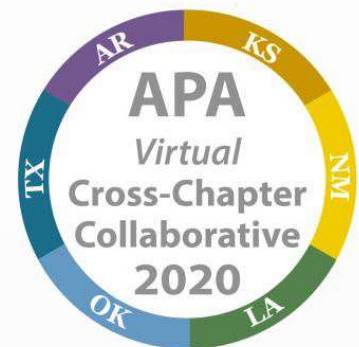
In 2020, Senior Planner, Blanca Azucena Tejera was selected as the Planning Commission Employee of the Year. Blanca received this recognition as a result of her on-going efforts to enhance Baton Rouge through the work of the Planning Commission. Blanca came to the Planning Commission from the Permit office. Her previous experience as a commercial plans reviewer has been a huge asset in reviewing projects that involve the preparation of plans, including complex planned developments as well as conditional use permits. Her attention to detail, which builds on her experience as a certified building plans examiner, ensures that these projects meet all the requirements of our code.

A native of Nicaragua, Blanca routinely proves her value to the Planning Commission by providing accurate translation to our growing Hispanic population. We are lucky to have her as a member of the team.

Conferences

Staff participated in the following conferences in 2020:

- American Planning Association, Cross Chapter Conference (virtual)
- CPEX, Smart Growth Summit (virtual)
- National Trust for Historic Preservation, Saving Places (virtual)
- Statewide Economic Development Summit (virtual)
- Louisiana Brownfields Conference (virtual)
- re-Vision ASLA: American Society of Landscape Architects (virtual)



Frank Duke (left) presents the Director's Award to Senior Planner, Blanca Azucena Tejera (right)

Employee of the Month

Employee of the Month is a recognition given by the Planning Director and Assistant Director to recognize employees for their work.

January -- Alex Johnson
 February -- Michael Hynson
 March -- Glenn Hanna
 June -- Jasmine Thomas
 July -- Meaghan Nguyen
 August -- Maggie Trenary Gleason
 September -- Rexter Chambers
 October -- Marie Hopkins
 November -- Vance Baldwin
 December -- Annette Chambliss

Project Specific Committees

Storm Water Master Plan

Mr Holcomb serves on the steering committee reviewing the work of the consultants selected by the Parish Department of Transportation and Drainage to develop a parish-wide stormwater master plan. The plan will identify needed improvements to stormwater facilities throughout the parish as well as recommended revisions to the Unified Development Code to better protect property from the impacts of flooding.

Short Term Rentals

In early 2020, Gilles Morin participated in a working group led by the Federation of Greater Baton Rouge Civic Associations to discuss potential regulations for short term rentals (STR's). The group discussed problems associated with over saturation of STRs in areas that exacerbated parking problems. Other issues such as loud parties that could also negatively impact existing homes were discussed. The Federation distributed a survey to identify if there was sufficient interest to create regulations and whether it would help to address existing issues. The group would like to determine if specific areas should be targeted or if regulations should be Parish-wide. The group hopes to continue meeting in 2021.

Baton Rouge Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Action Plan

Former Planning Director, Frank Duke served on the steering committee for the Pedestrian-Bike Safety Action Plan while Planning Project Coordinator Gilles Morin served on the technical committee. Staff worked with LADOTD, and consultants from Arcadis, to provide comments on the Baton Rouge Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Action Plan. The plan was completed in July 2020. It was sponsored by the FHWA because of the high number of pedestrian and bicycle fatalities. The safety action plan proposed a list of engineering and non-engineering countermeasures to address potential safety concerns along corridors and intersections. The recommendations were intended to be supplemented by location specific investigations to improve conditions for users.

Bike and Pedestrian Safety Coalition

Planning Project Coordinator Gilles Morin continued to serve on the Bike and Pedestrian Safety Team in 2020. The team met to develop strategies to combat these statistics including improved infrastructure; marketing campaigns to educate all users on pedestrian and bicycle laws; improved crash data reporting; offering design and education workshops; and using a Complete Streets approach to design.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan

Former Planning Director, Frank Duke served on the steering committee for the Pedestrian-Bike Master Plan while Planning Project Coordinator Gilles Morin served on the technical committee. The Plan was adopted by the Metro Council in June. It is now part of FUTUREBR's Transportation Element that will serve as a guide to implement bicycle and pedestrian programs and projects for our community. The plan analyzed the existing network and current programs to identify strengths and weaknesses. It provides recommendations for updates to existing policies and non-engineering programs to support implementation of the master plan. It outlines the prioritization results and phasing of a proposed network and provides planning-level cost estimates. This chapter also includes a barrier analysis, which involves the study of potential conflicts caused by natural and man-made barriers on the proposed network. A master plan had not been completed and adopted in East Baton Rouge since the 1990s.



**EAST BATON ROUGE
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT**

UNDERSTAND. PLAN. IMPLEMENT.



Public Outreach

Public Comment Form:

Before the COVID-19 shutdown, the Planning Office created a new online comment card for members of the public. It allows all comments to be submitted with no physical interaction thus prohibiting the spread of the disease. When the general public was not allowed to attend public meetings, the comments were read into the record during the public hearing. So far, we have received over 1000 comments.

Community Planning

With social distancing measures in place and only essential business going to council, proclamations for our local planning initiatives such as historic preservation, flooding, and community planning were paused, but will pick up once again when the pandemic is over. Nationally, the importance of planning is recognized every October with National Community Planning Month. This year's theme was Planning is Essential to Recovery.

East Baton Rouge Parish has participated in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) since 1979 and the Community Rating System (CRS) since 1991. The Parish is a CRS Class 7 rating. This rating results in a 15% reduction in flood insurance premiums for our residents.

Several community meetings around the parish were attended by planning staff in 2020 to discuss a variety of topics from planning to neighborhood concerns regarding developments. After March, all meetings were held virtually. These include:

- Hundred Oaks Civic Association - S. Acadian Office Park
- Pecue Place: - PUD
- Summergrove Subdivision
- @Highland Development
- Motor City Development
- Briar Place - HOA meeting
- Foster Creek Subdivision
- Council District 9 Meeting

Planning staff also presented before the following groups:

- Baton Rouge Federation of Civic Associations : Overview of the Planning Commission
- Baton Rouge North Economic Development District : Brownfield Sites
- Beauregard Town Civic Association : Historic Survey Findings



Federation of Greater Baton Rouge Civic Associations



Resource Center

The Resource Center provides a planning professional who is available during office hours to assist members of the public with the planning process, and to answer general questions about planning regulations and procedures. The planner also facilitates the provision of one-on-one assistance to answer more specific questions. Requests are responded to by telephone, face to face, by mail, or email. This helps to improve customer service by increasing accessibility to the planning staff, expediting the application process, providing numerous professional services, and disseminating information.

The Resource Center assisted over 2,731 people from the public through November 2020. The majority of the questions are centered on the Unified Development Code and specific requirements of development. In August, the Planning Director adjusted the time the Resource Center was open to include Noon to 1:00pm. This extended the time a professional planner was available to assist the public to include typical lunch times. This time is usually when someone is able to run errands.

Professional Development and Public Engagement

Education

The following staff hold professional certifications which require upkeep of continuing education units:

- Ryan Holcomb - American Institute of Certified Planners
- Gilles Morin - American Institute of Certified Planners, Certified Floodplain Manager
- Vance Baldwin - American Society of Landscape Architects, Certified Floodplain Manager
- Maggie Trenary Gleason - American Institute of Certified Planners
- Blanca Azucena Tejera - Louisiana State Uniform Construction Code Council

Staff members were able to take advantage of several opportunities for professional development during the Covid-19 shutdown. Webinars included APA's Housing for Diversity, City Health Safe Street in American Cities: How Complete Streets Laws are Creating Stronger Communities, EPA Resource Roadmapping for Revitalization: Tools for Leveraging Funding & Other Resources for Brownfields & Land Revitalization, Subdivision Design for Flood Resilience, and Planning for Wildfires.

Boards and Organizations

Planning Director Ryan Holcomb serves on Baton Rouge Area Chamber's Quality of Place Committee, which focuses on the attractiveness of its built and natural environment, with unique features and destinations, which add value to life, work, and play, and the economic opportunities those create. This work includes improving maintenance and code enforcement, sustainable development and blight elimination, and community enhancement and beautification programs. The Committee identified updating the Unified Development Code one of four priority areas considered essential to the enhancement of the City-Parish's quality of place and attractiveness for new businesses. The Committee made this a priority in 2020.

Planning Director Ryan Holcomb serves on the Board of Directors for the Mid City Redevelopment Alliance (MCRA), a non-profit organization dedicated to the growth and renewal of the Mid City region.

Site Plans and Plats Manager Vance Baldwin serves on the Complete Streets Citizen's Advisory Committee.

Long Range Planning Manager Maggie Trenary Gleason serves on the board of the Louisiana Brownfield Association.

Long Range Planner Collin Lindrew serves as Assistant Director to the Capital Section of American Planning Association's Louisiana Chapter. The Louisiana APA chapter's mission is to promote the practice of community and regional planning in Louisiana by enhancing the effectiveness of planners in impacting public policy.

Administration

The Administration Division of the Planning Commission oversees the duties of the Planning Commission, including the day-to-day management of the department and all personnel. This division is responsible for developing the department budget, developing and coordinating work programs, processing all Unified Development Code amendments and processing payroll. This division also works closely with other City-Parish department heads, agencies, and organizations to develop and monitor projects, and represents the Planning Commission before the public at various meetings including Metropolitan Council. Additionally, the administration regularly provides informational updates on multiple projects to various groups, including the Greater Baton Rouge Federation of Civic Associations, neighborhood groups, the Board of Realtors and the Growth Coalition.



Back : Ryan Holcomb and Gilles Morin
Front: Annette Chambliss and Donna Bennett

Reasonable Accommodation

The Federal Fair Housing Act makes it unlawful for localities to make a dwelling unavailable to a person because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status or disability. A violation of this federal law occurs by showing that a policy or practice of a local government has a disparate impact on a protected class. Prohibited discrimination includes failure to make reasonable accommodation in rules and policies when such is necessary to afford a protected person equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling.

The Fair Housing Act defines “handicap” (the Americans With Disabilities Act uses the term “disability”) to include recovering substance abuse patients, meaning that the Parish must allow homes serving the needs of people with handicaps or disabilities in all zoning districts that permit single family homes through the granting of a Reasonable Accommodation. In 2020, the Planning Commission approved 16 of these requests.

Amendments to the Unified Development Code

The following is a list of amendments to the Unified Development Code approved by the Metropolitan Council in 2020 on the recommendation of the Planning Commission.

February:

Chapter 10, Overlay Districts The Hundred Oaks Overlay requires that abutting nonconforming lots in the area that are held in common ownership as of March 1, 2020 be considered as a single lot for purposes of development.

May:

Chapter 4 Site Plans and Plats This amendment relocates and updates language relative to utility requirements in subdivisions.

Chapter 14 Utilities This amendment reorganizes and updates language to eliminate conflicting requirements.

Chapter 19, Definitions This amendment relocates definitions currently in Chapter 14, to Chapter 19 and revises definitions associated with other chapters.

June:

Chapter 3 Processes This amendment applies the same standard to subsequent conditional use permit applications, allowing a now conditional use permit to be sought on a property which a previous conditional use permit has been denied if the new application is for a less intense use.

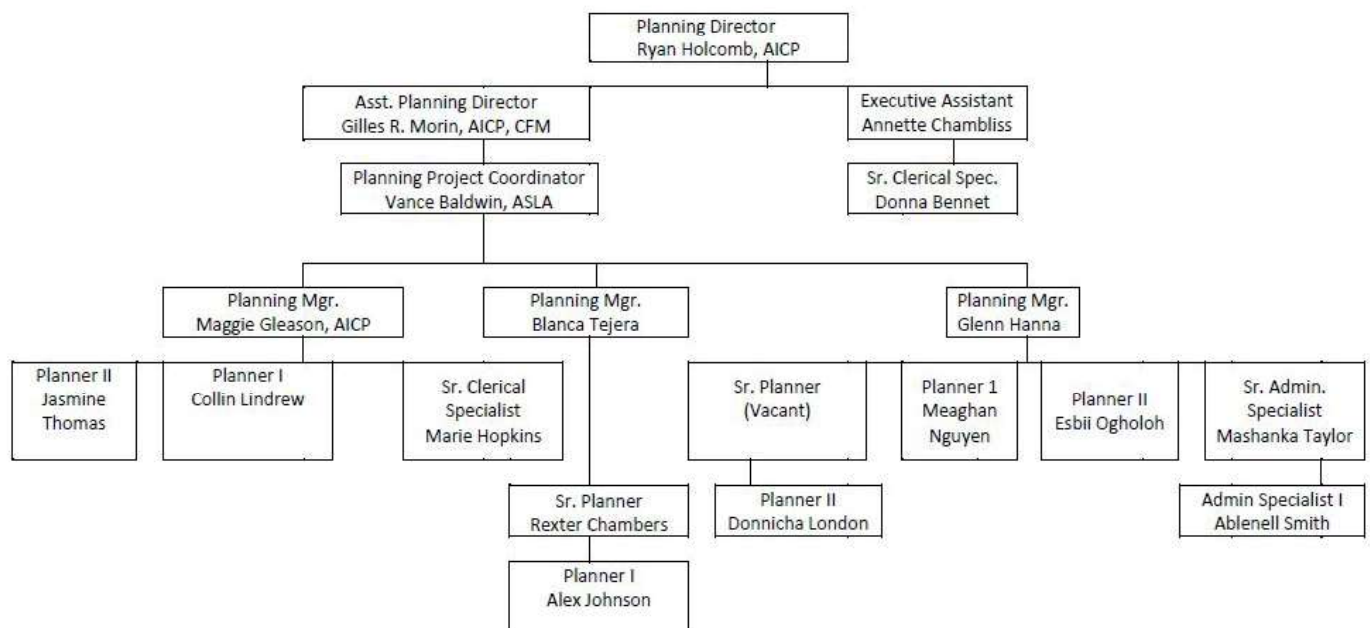
August:

Chapter 8 Zoning Districts A re-write of Chapter 8 which reorganizes the chapter by intensity of use, eliminated some zoning districts, made others inactive, and restored one district to active use.

Chapter 9 Use Regulations A re-write of Chapter 9 which creates easy to read tables of principal uses by zoning districts.

Chapter 11 Dimensional Regulations A re-write of Chapter 11 which creates easy to read tables of development standards by building type.

Planning Commission Organization-2020

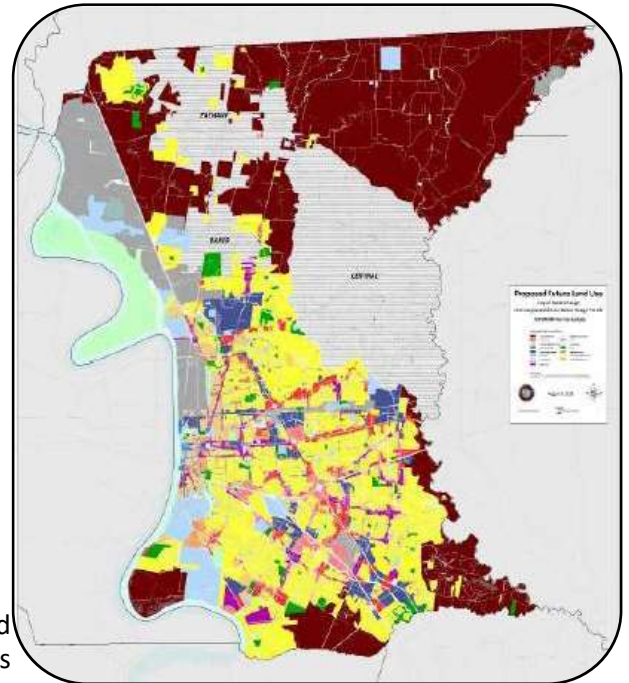


Long Range Planning Division

The Long Range Planning Division is responsible for the coordination and implementation of FUTUREBR, the 20-year comprehensive land use and development plan for the City and Parish. The primary function of this Division is to focus on long-range, comprehensive planning for the City-Parish. The Long Range Planning Division also administers the Brownfields Program, Enterprise Zone Program and Restoration Tax Abatement Program along with staffing the Historic Preservation Commission and the Complete Streets Committees.



Back: Maggie Trenary Gleason and Marie Hopkins
Front: Jasmine Thomas and Collin Lindrew



FUTUREBR

FUTUREBR was adopted in 2011, and the first update was approved by the Planning Commission and Metropolitan Council in 2018. This year's focus was on implementation and lead agency coordination.

Plan Amendments

FUTUREBR serves as a guide for development within the Parish. Processes for amendments and updates to the plan were developed so alterations in growth patterns can be accommodated. Conditions change over time and require review at a greater detail for the plan to remain relevant. In 2020, staff processed 19 plan amendments.

Enterprise Zone Program

The Baton Rouge Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program encourages the creation of permanent new jobs in geographically targeted areas of the parish. The EZ Program offers local sales tax rebates to new and expanding businesses that are located in Enterprise Zones or in specially designated Economic Development Zones. The local program offers a 1.9% sales tax refund on construction materials and equipment purchased by eligible non-retail businesses located within a designated Enterprise or Economic Development Zone.

In 2020, the Long Range Division received seventeen Advance Notifications from the State including one new Enterprise Zone applications for eligible projects. Currently, there are four active applications undergoing review; the others were either not in eligible locations or chose not to pursue an application.

Restoration Tax Abatement

The Restoration Tax Abatement (RTA) is a State program that provides an up to ten-year abatement of local property taxes on the renovations and improvements of existing commercial structures and owner-occupied residences. This incentive is open to all businesses and homeowners in qualifying locations such as the Downtown Development District, Economic Development Districts, Historic Districts, or those listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2019, the state added Federal Opportunity Zones as a qualifying location.

The Long Range Division processes applications submitted to Louisiana Economic Development, preparing a summary of the project and an estimate of the amount of property taxes that would be abated for each project that is provided to the affected taxing authorities and to the Metropolitan Council for their evaluation and approval. The Long Range Planning Division processed 25 advances, 25 new applications and 6 renewals.



In Loving Arms, a medical pediatric center in the Scotlandville area, was approved for the Restoration tax abatement which created 10 new jobs, and made a capital investment of \$1.5 million into upgrades of the building.

Brownfields Program

The Planning Commission successfully closed out a \$400,000 EPA Community-wide Brownfield Assessment Grant and submitted a new application for fiscal year 2021. These funds are used to provide environmental site assessments on underutilized properties in Baton Rouge, and to provide area-wide brownfield inventories of corridors targeted for reinvestment. Implementing the Imagine Plank Road small area plan will involve assessing many brownfield sites in this corridor and will be the focus of the program for the next year. Mid-City and Scotlandville will continue to be a priority focus as well.

The City-Parish is also a member of the South Louisiana Brownfields Coalition Revolving Loan Fund. This fund provides access to remediation loans and grants for brownfield redevelopment projects in Baton Rouge, Acadiana, Houma/Thibodaux, and Lake Charles.

Interns

University students who are currently enrolled in programs such as architecture, landscape architecture, geography, urban planning and related fields can be considered for the intern program. The program provides an opportunity for students to apply their studies to advance the work plan of the Planning Commission and gain valuable experience.

Chris Berg, a fifth year architecture student from LSU, is minoring in construction management. Chris worked on our Beauregard Town Standing Structure Survey by assisting our consultants with the field work, data collection and photography. Our newest interns are Camille Norton and Gabriel Olivier, who are both political science majors at LSU.

Current Planning Division

The Current Planning Division provides professional assistance and advice to the public for the development of land throughout East Baton Rouge Parish. This assistance may take the form of answering inquiries as to what various parcels of land are zoned and what land uses are permitted in the different zoning districts, or answering questions from the public concerning the development of property as it relates to the Unified Development Code and the Comprehensive Plan.

The primary function of this division is to focus on rezoning cases that require processing applications and presenting the applications at public hearings before the Planning Commission and Metropolitan Council. The section is also responsible for planned developments, letters of interpretation, and conditional use permits



From left to right: Glenn Hanna, Blanca Azucena Tejera, Esbii Ogholoh, Donnicha London, Mashanka Taylor, Ablenell Smith and Meaghan Nguyen

Planned Developments

Planned Developments (PUD) are a zoning with a site plan together that specify the uses and allow for the variation of conventional zoning requirements in regards to setbacks and lot dimensions. PUDs offer neighboring property owners details to the proposed development as well as the ability to comment at the public hearings. The Planning Commission Staff coordinates with various city departments such as Traffic and Drainage, Landscape, and Subdivision Engineering, in the review to ensure that each submittal complies with the Unified Development Code.



Residents gathered at the open space in Pointe Marie, a Planned Unit Development



A new bridge at Rouzan Development links this new neighborhood to the surrounding uses through a connected and walkable design.

Site Plan and Plat Division

The Site Plan and Plat Division provides assistance to the public for the division of land and site plan review of large developments which allow for permitted uses by right with the current zoning. Divisions of property may include large subdivisions, small divisions of family land or exchanges of property between adjoining property owners.

Site Plan review may include developments requiring substantial alterations to an existing building footprints or the planning of a project which may impact the surrounding property owners due to infrastructure improvements.

Subdivisions

Subdivision activity includes the following:

- Division of a lot, tract, or parcel of land into two or more lots, plots, sites, or other units of land
- Dedication, granting, or construction of a road, highway, street, alley, or servitude through a tract of land regardless of area
- Exchange of property in which property lines are reconfigured, but no new lots are created
- Combination of smaller lots of record into larger tracts
- Development of a tract or site of five acres on which two or more multi-family buildings, office buildings, shops or store buildings, warehouses or other commercial or industrial buildings are to be developed

Exchange of property applications and subdivision applications that create five or less lots that have the required frontage and no waivers of the Subdivision Ordinance are reviewed by the Planning Commission Staff. All other subdivision applications are reviewed by the Planning Commission Staff and the Department of Development's Development Review Committee prior to approval of the proposed development by the Planning Commission.

Site Plan Review

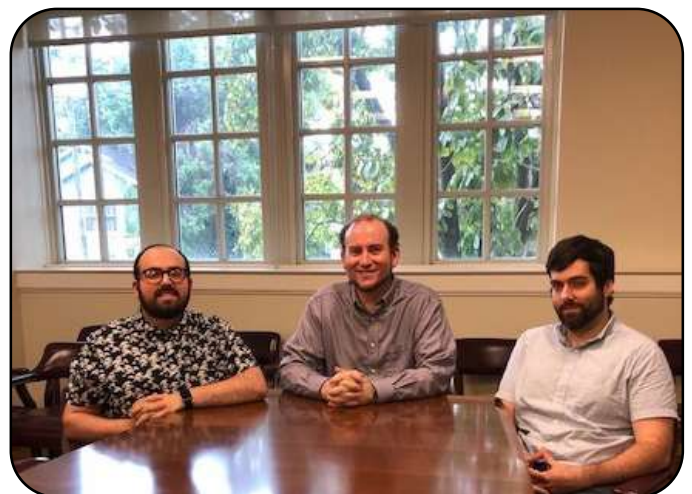
The Site Plan Review process, which was revised in 1995, assures that all new major multi-family, commercial and industrial developments within the City-Parish have adequate drainage, parking facilities and space for vehicular circulation, as well as proper zoning. Site Plan Review applies to all high density units such as:

- Multi-family projects of more than 75 units or offices, shops, stores
- Other commercial or industrial uses with a building(s) of more than 30,000 square feet, an addition to an existing structure in which the increase in aggregate floor area is greater than twenty percent
- Any building that falls within an Urban Design Overlay District

Different procedures apply for projects with more than 100 multi-family units or offices, shops, stores or other commercial uses with a building or buildings containing more than 50,000 square feet. Projects of this magnitude are subject to Planning Commission approval. Developers of properties that require Site Plan Review submit appropriate information to the Planning Commission and coordinating agencies for review.



Our Lady of the Lake Internal medicine clinic located in the Government Street Urban Design Overlay District was constructed this year following a detailed design review.



Site Plan and Plat staff: From left, Rexter Chambers, Vance Baldwin and Alex Johnson

2020 Case Activity

Application Type	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Administration					
UDC Amendments	13	18	13	22	8
Reasonable Accommodations	0	9	22	9	15
Long Range Division					
FUTUREBR Amendments	10	21	25	19	22
Demolitions	4	4	1	7	2
COA - Public Hearing	3	9	5	7	3
COA - Staff Level	4	7	7	3	6
National Landmark Designations	0	1	2	4	1
Current Division					
Rezoning	65	109	89	84	63
Planned Unit Developments	30	73	80	76	58
SPUDs	8	5	13	6	11
ISPUDs	4	9	4	12	11
TNDs	4	0	6	18	19
Conditional Use Permits	11	12	16	11	13
Letters of Interpretation	204	257	209	198	244
Site Plan and Plat Division					
Large Subdivisions	7	11	12	14	12
Small Subdivisions	33	81	72	89	59
Exchanges of Property	49	69	112	79	88
Mobile Home Park	0	0	0	1	0
Revocations	13	13	5	15	6
Site Plans	16	29	28	14	10
Alternative Parking	6	0	0	0	4
Sidewalk Waivers	1	1	5	3	7
Street Name Changes	3	4	2	1	4

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2020 FUTUREBR PROGRESS REPORT



ASSESSING OVERALL PROGRESS

GREEN: Moving forward - most activities are on track

YELLOW: Progress made - things are happening but some concerns

RED: Progress stopped - major issues or nothing happening



This report will also use the AARP Livability Index, a web-based tool developed by the AARP Public Policy Institute to measure community livability on an scale of 0-100, with higher scores representing greater livability. This score uses 40 metrics and 20 policies across seven categories: housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, civic engagement, and opportunity.

AARP Livability Score

Baton Rouge, LA

53

FUTUREBR CORE VALUES FROM THE VISION

This vision was developed by a diverse group of residents and stakeholders that provided input through workshops, open houses, interviews, focus groups and survey discussions. Respondents consistently cited the following core values and aspirations they believed should be the foundation for building a vision for East Baton Rouge Parish.

Prosperity: All residents have access to a thriving economy with job opportunities in growing diverse businesses.

Equity: All residents have access to a good education, public services, housing and job opportunities.

Diversity: The City is known for embracing diversity and acceptance of other cultures, ethnicities and groups.

Safety: People feel safe where they live, work and play.

Strong Neighborhoods and Communities: Neighborhoods in all areas of the City-Parish are desirable places to live and have a range of housing types and nearby amenities to serve residents.

Convenient Transportation: There is a variety of choices for moving both people and goods, as well as improving existing ways to move throughout the parish.

Healthy Environment: Natural resources are protected and conserved to provide active and passive recreational opportunities for current and future residents.

Sustainability: The future reflects the creativity and resiliency of East Baton Rouge Parish's residents and offers a sustainable place for citizens to thrive- with a focus on building a future based on fiscal, physical, environmental economic and equitable sustainability.

2020 REVIEW: ELEMENT BY ELEMENT

FUTUREBR proposes an ambitious blueprint for the future of Baton Rouge – how the Parish will look, function, and feel in the coming decades. This report can provide an early warning if goals are not being met. It also can provide information about successes, and achieving the goals of the plan.

The Progress Report provides an analysis of action items used to implement the plan and outlines successes from lead agency activities. Using parish-wide and local indicators such as annual building permits issued, miles of trails completed, and rent burden, the Progress Report measures implementation of the plan toward achieving the Vision.

This report can be used by the administration to define budgetary priorities, Capital Improvements Planning and overall work programs for the City-Parish Departments and the Lead Agencies that assist in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

FUTUREBR completed its first update in 2018, and the 2020 progress report reflects those changes.



Citizens from around the Parish participate in the open house for the East Baton Rouge Pedestrian Bicycle Master Plan.

LAND USE GOALS

1. Use the adopted Comprehensive Plan to guide development decisions.
2. Make land use decisions that contribute to the Vision and East Baton Rouge Parish's economic vitality.
3. Build a community fabric of distinctive neighborhoods and diverse districts where Parish residents have access to local commercial areas, schools, libraries, parks and open space areas.
4. Maintain, stabilize and strengthen existing neighborhoods, making them places where new residents are attracted to live.
5. Promote development patterns that encourage connectivity and walkability.
6. Put procedures, processes and tools in place to effectively and equitably implement FUTUREBR.
7. Ensure that areas where new growth is occurring benefit from high quality sustainable development
8. Preserve and enhance environmental assets.
9. Establish a mechanism and process to monitor movement towards realizing the Vision.
10. Enhance community design character by upgrading components of the built environment.
11. Support a distinctive urban identity, enriched sense-of-place, and high quality of life.

Total Element Objectives – 28
Total Element Action Items – 50

Principal Lead Agencies
Planning Commission
Information Services
Office of the Mayor-President

Land Use

The purpose of this element is to guide the physical growth of the City of Baton Rouge and Parish of East Baton Rouge, and provide the framework for the creation of land development regulations and policies.

Indicators

Proportion of infill construction

FUTUREBR anticipates the addition of roughly 48,000 new households and 135,000 new jobs in the Parish by 2030, and calls for ten percent of new growth to be infill and redevelopment. By analyzing new construction permits based on their location in the four character areas, the proportion of new growth that is infill can be determined by adding the percentages located in Downtown and Urban/Walkable.

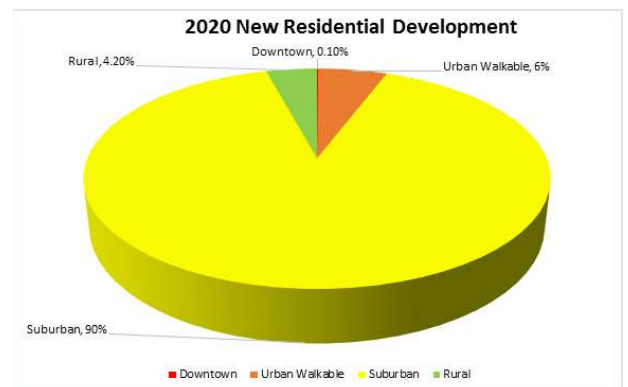
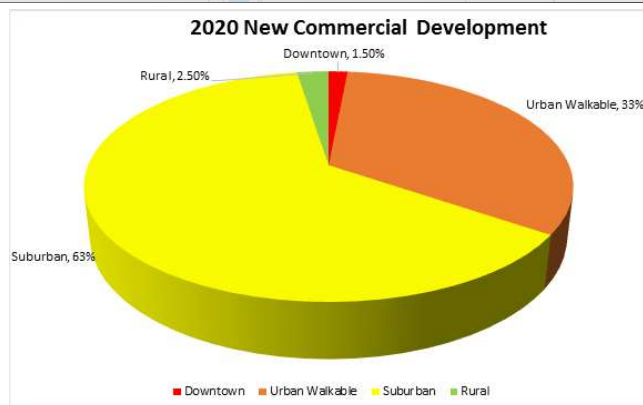
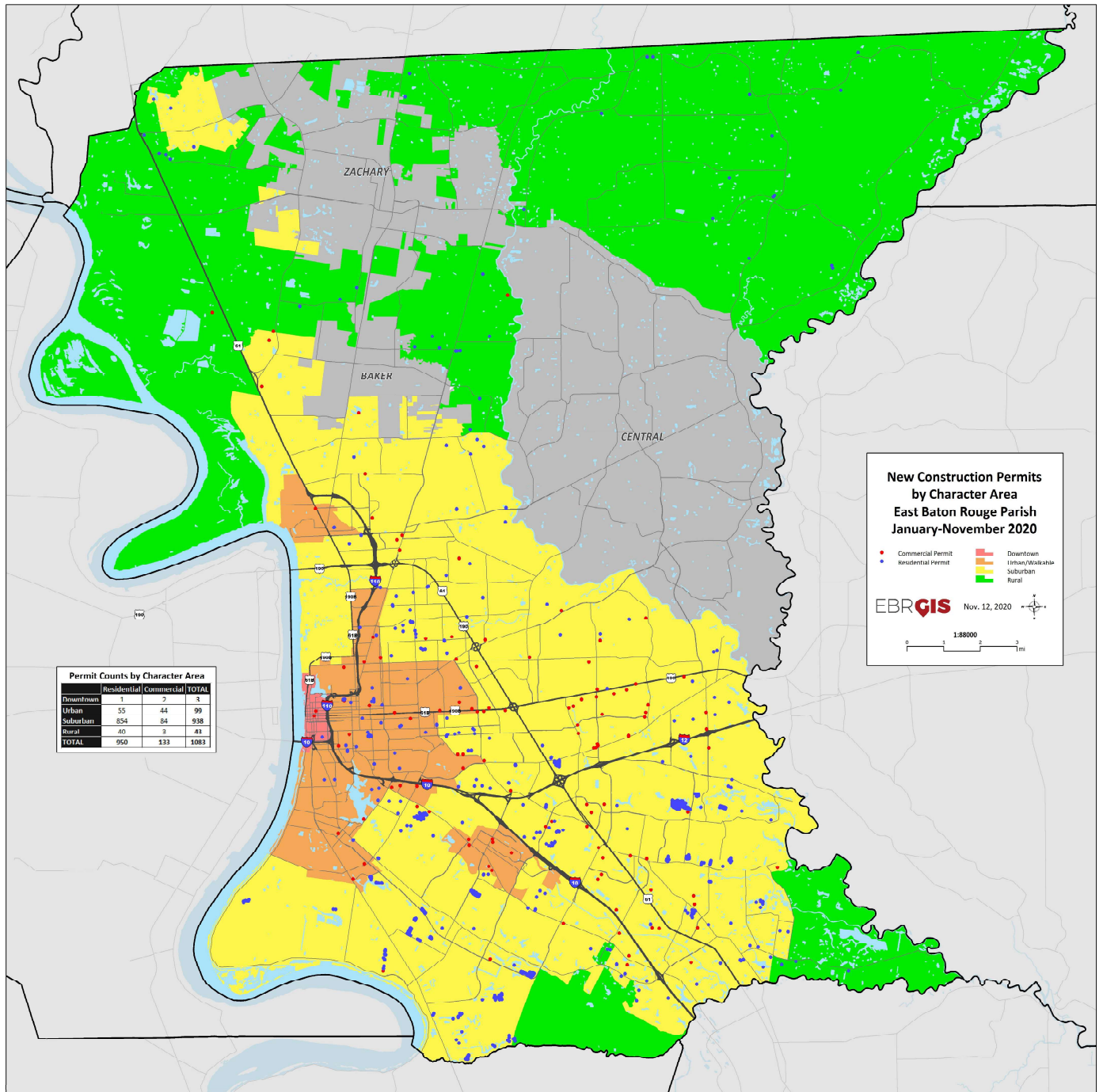
Infill (downtown + urban walkable)			
	2015	2019	2020
Commercial		26%	34.5%
Residential		5.5%	6.1%
Total	10%	11%	9%

In 2020, the high percentage of residential development in suburban areas brings the total infill development to 9%, which is less than the FUTUREBR scenario. The chart above shows the Downtown and Urban/Walkable character areas had 34.5% of new commercial development which was an increase from last year. The majority of new residential construction occurred in the Suburban area with 90% of residential permits issued in this character areas. The map on the next page pinpoints these permits within the Parish.



Drone image of blighted site in Mid-City, a former auto repair and filling station and a rendering of the new housing proposed. Planning staff assisted this infill development with a rezoning, and the site used UDC parking alternatives to make the project work.

Once the development addresses remediation and clean up, the site will provide much needed housing near the new Baton Rouge General Emergency Room and the Bridge Center Mental Health Clinic, which are creating numerous jobs, and needed services.



LAND USE GOALS

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Principal Lead Agencies
Planning Commission
Build Baton Rouge
Office of the Mayor-President

Share of Metropolitan Statistical Area population

East Baton Rouge Parish is the central parish within the Greater Baton Rouge metropolitan area. The metropolitan statistical area (MSA) includes nine other parishes: Ascension, Assumption, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Point Coupee, St. Helena, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana. FUTUREBR was predicated on an “aspirational population forecast” that projects the Parish will retain its proportional share of the region’s population. When FUTUREBR was adopted in 2011, East Baton Rouge’s share of region-wide population was 55 percent. In 2019, this share was estimated to have declined to 53 percent; while not statistically significant, we need to continue to monitor this change.

Source: US Census

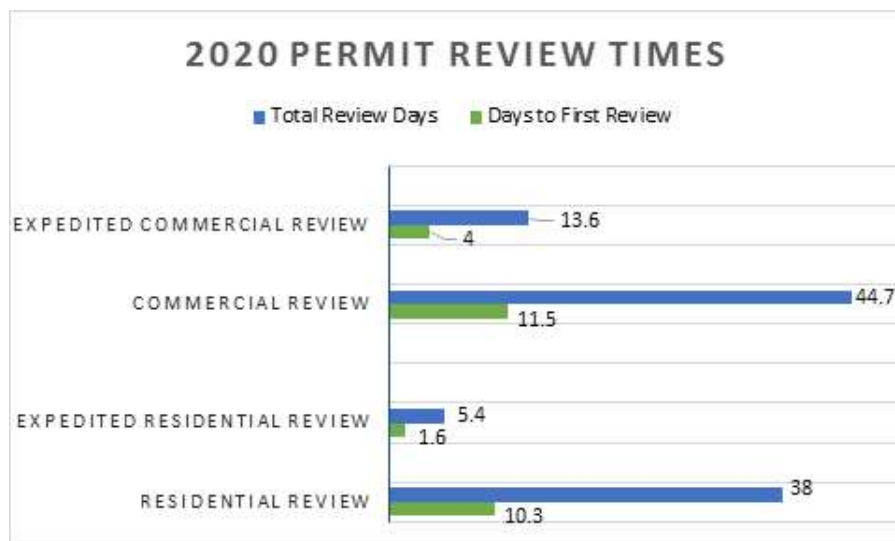
Accomplishments

Unified Development Code Amendments

Since the creation and update of FUTUREBR, several important Unified Development Code amendments have been made that align with land use goals. In 2020, the last major updates to the zoning code were completed, along with streamlined charts for the uses allowed, which was a substantial goal of FUTUREBR.

Permit Review Times

In March of 2020, Department of Development increased their third party reviews and made full use of MyPermit Now software which has resulted in a much faster and predictable review turnaround as shown in the chart below. Some of the highest review times, 78 days for a residential permit, have seen an 80% improvement.



Small Area Plans

Small Area Planning is a partnership between the City-Parish and the area's stakeholders – residents, businesses, institutions, and other government entities. The advantage of the Small Area Plan is that it engages community involvement to produce focused recommendations, ideas, and desires for one area with a goal of making the process more predictable and efficient.

In 2020, after a year of community meetings and planning Imagine Plank Road, was adopted, and there are now a total of three small area plans. This small area plan addresses community disinvestment by planning for a transit oriented development. Planning staff and Build Baton Rouge are working together to create an incentives overlay based on lowered parking requirements and higher density credits in exchange for desired uses and high quality design.



MOVING FORWARD

Key Accomplishments

Small Area Plans:

Health District

Scotlandville

Imagine Plank Road

UDC Amendments

Permit Review improvements



Rendering of a catalyst project on Plank Road, The Food Hub, a mixed use of housing, grocery, pharmacy and an incubator space for start-up culinary businesses

COMMUNITY DESIGN AND NEIGHBORHOODS GOALS

1. Enhance community character by upgrading components of the built environment.
2. Support a distinctive community identity; enriched sense of place, and high quality of life.
3. Promote development patterns that encourage connectivity and pedestrian orientation.

Total Element Objectives – 13

Total Element Action Items – 39

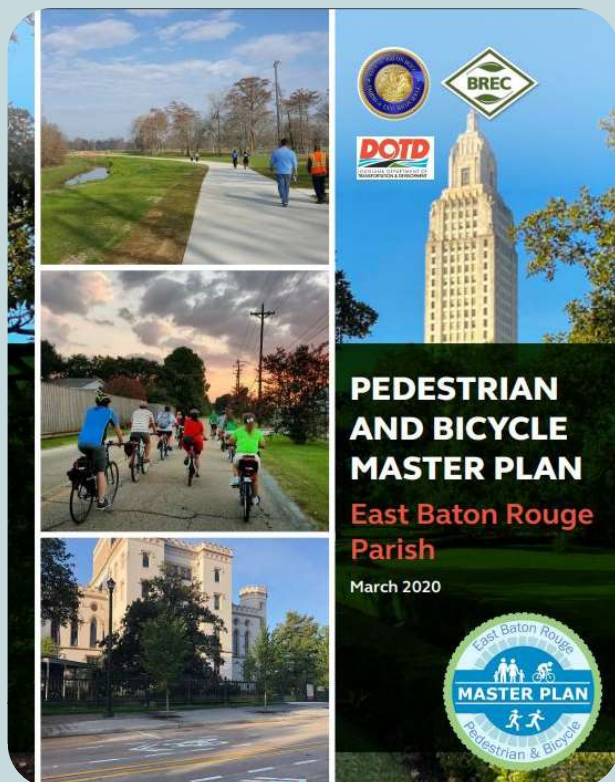
Principal Lead Agencies

Office of the Mayor-President

Planning Commission

Build Baton Rouge

Department of Development



The adoption and implementation of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master plan will have a positive impact on Community Design and Neighborhoods.

Community Design and Neighborhoods

The purpose of this element is to guide new development and encourage reinvestment in existing neighborhoods so that strong interconnected neighborhoods and districts are created and enhanced which are healthy, walkable and comfortable. It includes descriptions that Baton Rouge can use to increase connectivity and walkability and includes policy goals which should be implemented through zoning. The Community Design and Neighborhood Element supplements the Land Use and the Transportation elements with recommendations for form, character, and functionality.

Indicator

Walk Score

One metric used to measure the walkability of a city is the proprietary Walk Score indicator produced by [walkscore.com](https://www.walkscore.com). The Walk Score measures walkability on a scale from 0 - 100 based on walking routes to destinations such as grocery stores, schools, parks, restaurants, and retail. In 2020, Baton Rouge was given a Walk Score of 41, making us a "Car-Dependent City" ranking 85th out of 108 US cities with a population greater than 200,000. The walk score is an improvement from 2015, when Baton Rouge had a walk score of 37. Walk Score noted that the most walkable neighborhoods in Baton Rouge are Downtown, the Garden District, and Mid City.

Bike Score

For the first time, in 2020, Baton Rouge also received a bike score. Baton Rouge has a bike score of 47, making us a "Somewhat Bikeable" city. Baton Rouge ranks 72nd out of 108 U.S. cities with a population greater than 200,000.

Source: www.walkscore.com



Gotcha bikes at Milford Wampold Memorial Park
Source: The Advocate

Accomplishments

State Historic Preservation Grant

Last year, the City-Parish was awarded a grant to develop a building survey and design guidelines for Beauregard Town. In 2020, with the help of our consultants and interns, we completed both the building survey and the design guidelines. These deliverables are key to allow Beauregard Town to begin pursuing Local Historic District designation. In 2021, we anticipate the designation of Beauregard Town as Baton Rouge's third Local Historic District.



Historic Beauregard Town home at 728 Europe Street

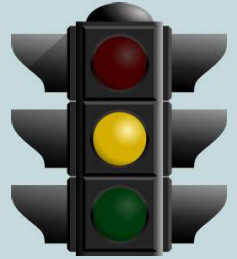
Operation Fresh Start

In February, Mayor Broome kicked off Operation Fresh Start, a parish-wide cleanup effort. On specified Saturday mornings, volunteers pick up litter and beautify targeted areas. Following cleanup on Saturday, Department of Public Works staff concentrate their efforts for the week to clean up litter and causes of blight in the area. In 2020, Operation Fresh Start has cleaned up areas in Baker, Downtown, Eden Park, Gardere, Mid City, Scotlandville, and O'Neal Lane. Since its start in 2018, Operation Fresh Start has resulted in the following:

- Disposal of over 1,065 tons of garbage and debris
- Removal of over 9,376 illegally dumped tires
- Removal of over 3,800 bags of litter
- 125 street signs replaced
- Over 275 potholes filled
- Removal of over 34,000 pounds of broken concrete
- Removal of over 3,100 illegally placed signs

AARP Livability
Score
Neighborhood Category
Access to life work and play

37



MOVING FORWARD

Key Accomplishments

Beauregard Town Survey and Design Guidelines
Dr. Leo S. Butler House
Operation Fresh Start



Dr. Leo S. Butler House



Volunteer cleanup effort.
Source: WAFB

TRANSPORTATION GOALS

1. Establish a road network with improved and acceptable local and regional traffic congestion levels.
2. Establish and support the development of connectivity throughout the transportation system.
3. Implement complete street policies and design concepts.
4. Develop a modern, choice-rider transit system.
5. Enhance the bicycle and pedestrian network throughout the Parish.
6. Improve coordination between agencies to improve communication and transportation results.
7. Reduce vehicular emissions.

Total Element Objectives – 17

Total Element Action Items – 48

Principal Lead Agencies

Department of Transportation and Drainage

Capital Area Transit

Mayor's Office

Build Baton Rouge

Transportation

This purpose of this element is to ensure a sustainable transportation network through connectivity, efficiency and flexibility which supports Baton Rouge's livability, sustainability, and overall economic growth.

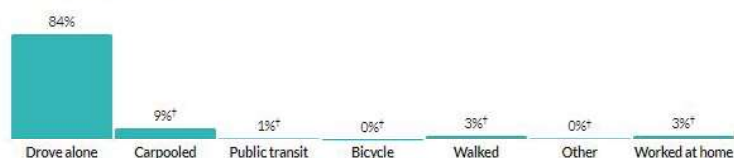
Indicators

Congestion Levels

While the data has shown that workers in East Baton Rouge Parish have a shorter average commute time than the state and national average (see box on the next page), the congestion levels of our streets is very high. The graphic below, highlights the severity of the congested streets during the weekdays and the steep drop in the graph is due to the Covid-19 shutdowns. By week 42 of 2020, the congestions levels begin to trend upward. It is important to monitor both the means of transportation to work and the congestion levels as our transportation plans mature.

Means of Transportation to Work

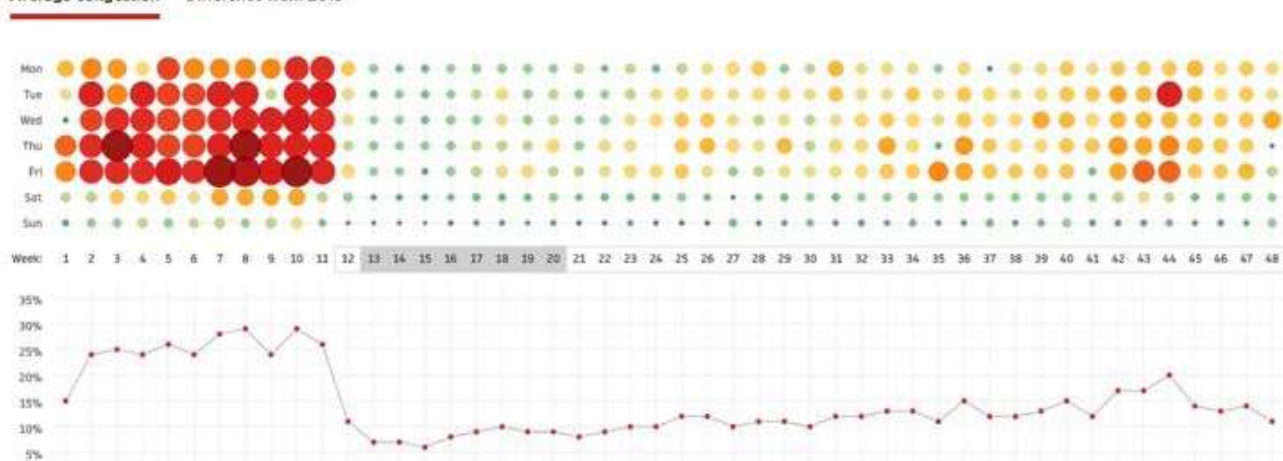
Means of transportation to work



The chart above taken from the 2019 American Community Survey, is the percentage of travelers using a particular type of transportation for work. Information on changes in mode for commuting is one gauge of the effectiveness of transportation policy. The graph below shows driving alone is the main mode of commute in East Baton Rouge Parish.

DAILY AND WEEKLY CONGESTION LEVEL

Average congestion Difference from 2019



Accomplishments

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

In 2019, local agencies worked together to secure a \$15 million federal BUILD grant, which supports infrastructure investments across the country, and will be used in Baton Rouge to fund and implement the Plank-Nicholson BRT. This year, progress has been made in securing additional funding and towards the \$53.6 million high-frequency transit service, with an anticipated construction start in 2021.

This 9 mile BRT will efficiently link residents to the two universities, the Water Campus development, downtown and numerous commercial businesses along Plank Road, where the highest percentage of carless households reside.

Transportation and Land Use

In 2020, MovEBR has made steady progress on the parish's largest infrastructure project. The chart below, which is from the MovEBR website, shows the progress made in the past year, including a major upgrade to traffic signals and new school flashers. The upgrades to the traffic signals will allow for transit and emergency vehicle pre-emption as well as synchronization to ease congested streets.

AARP Livability Score

Transportation
Category

Safe and convenient options

37



MOVING FORWARD

Key Accomplishments

EBR Pedestrian Bicycle Master
Plan MovEBR School Flashers
MovEBR Signalization
Bus Rapid Transit

Transportation to work

23.9 minutes

Mean travel time to work

about 90 percent of the figure in Louisiana: 26.6

about 90 percent of the figure in United States:
27.6

Key Benefit	Number Planned	% of Projects in Planning Phase	⇒ % of Projects in Design Phase	⇒ % of Projects in Construction Phase	⇒ % of Projects Completed
Lane Miles of New Roadway	118.66	52.1%	47.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Lane Miles of Enhanced Roadway	125.57	36.4%	61.5%	2.1%	0.0%
Miles of Sidewalk	118.06	40.5%	57.9%	1.5%	0.0%
Miles of Bike Paths	69.31	45.5%	54.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Traffic Signals Upgraded	177	47.0%	53.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Traffic Signals Replaced	199	19.0%	81.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Miles of Fiber for Signals	116	✓	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
New School Flashers	400	✓	✓	100%	0.0%

Source: MovEBR.com

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. Develop, cultivate and retain talent.
2. Support private sector business development.
3. Support employers in key geographic areas.
4. Connect education and training institutions with private and public sectors.

Total Element Objectives – 23

Total Element Action Items – 59

Principal Lead Agencies

Baton Rouge Area Chamber

Baton Rouge Health District

Downtown Development District

Information Services



New multi-tenant office building of the Water Campus in Downtown East



Economic Development Element

The purpose of this element is to provide an analysis of Baton Rouge's economy, including long-term socioeconomic trends, an assessment of key industry clusters and an action plan that will guide Baton Rouge's economic development efforts for future decades.

Indicators

Median Household Income

Since 2017, the median household income in the City of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish has increased. Both the city and the parish increased by around 2 percent from 2017 to 2018. The city increased by 6.5% and the parish increased by 4.2% from 2018 to 2019. From 2017 to 2019, the city increased by 8.6%, the parish 6.8%. Over this same time period, the median household income in the U.S. increased by 2.3%. As economic development goals are met, the median household income for the parish should continue to increase.

	2017	2018	2019
City of Baton Rouge	\$40,948	\$41,761	\$44,470
East Baton Rouge Parish	\$51,436	\$52,719	\$54,948
U.S.	\$61,372	\$60,293	\$62,843

Source: US Census

People in Poverty

Both the city of Baton Rouge and East Baton Rouge Parish have seen a decrease in the number of people living in poverty, but at a much slower pace than the U.S. As the Parish continues to strive to set the bar for economic development, people in poverty for the parish should continue to close the gap between that of the national average.

From 2017 to 2019, the number of people in poverty decreased by 1.2 percent in the city and 1.4 percent in the parish, but 4.1 percent in the U.S. From 2018 to 2019, the number of people in poverty decreased by 0.4 percent in the city, 0.6 percent in the parish, and 3.6 percent in the U.S.

	2017	2018	2019
City of Baton Rouge	26.0%	25.2%	24.8%
East Baton Rouge Parish	19.1%	18.3%	17.7%
U.S.	14.6%	14.1%	10.5%

Source: US Census

Accomplishments

Baton Rouge Health District Awarded Federal Economic Development Administration Venture Challenge Grant

The Baton Rouge Health District was awarded the Federal Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Venture Challenge grant. The \$600,000 grant award will be matched by the Health District, Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), and the Pennington Biomedical Research Center. This funding will be used to launch a \$1.2 million regional healthcare technology innovation program (Health Tech Catalyst) that will foster entrepreneurship and help improve the lives of patients. The program expects to create 100 new jobs, \$5 million in innovation capital and have an overall engagement of 1,500 stakeholders.

Baton Rouge General Emergency Room

In summer 2020, the Baton Rouge General Mid City Medical Center Emergency Room reopened for the first time since 2015. The center reopened with financial support with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP). In separate agreement stipulation, GOHSEP will reimburse the hospital up to \$20 million for the costs during the contract term. Since the reopening, the center has created 50 new jobs, for an estimated total of 400 jobs. The revival of the center provides adequate medical services to residents and visitors and joins other essential services in the Mid-City and downtown area.

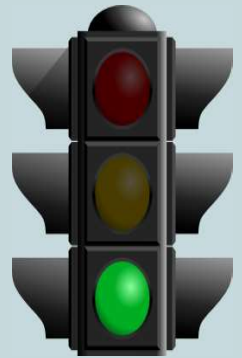
Economic Development Incentives Map

The Economic Development Incentives Map is a user-friendly GIS Web Application that displays a variety of economic related datasets for East Baton Rouge Parish. Users can confirm sites that qualify for local economic development incentives, such as Economic Development Districts, Enterprise Zones, and Historic District Tax.

The various map layers include more details about the respective incentive as well as hyperlinks for supporting documentation. This application has helped users to identify if their property is located in a qualifying area, making it easier to apply for local incentives.

AARP Livability
Score
Opportunity Category
Inclusion and possibilities

50



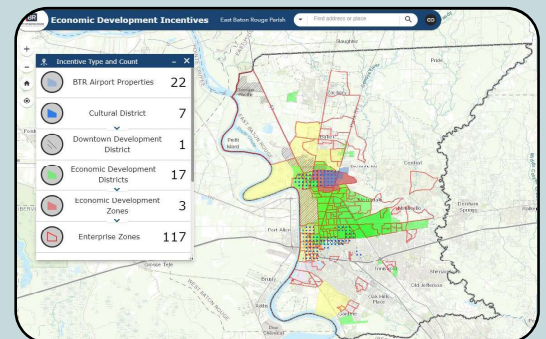
PROGRESS MADE

Key Accomplishments

The Water Campus Developments
Baton Rouge General Emergency Room reopens
Economic Development Incentives map created
Baton Rouge Health District awarded EDA Venture Challenge Grant



Baton Rouge General Mid-City Medical Center
Source: Baton Rouge General



Economic Development Incentives Map

HOUSING GOALS

1. Create a balanced housing supply.
2. Coordinate housing planning with the region.
3. Ensure that East Baton Rouge Parish's existing neighborhoods are stable and strong.
4. Coordinate housing and economic development efforts.
5. Promote sustainable, energy-efficient housing in transportation-efficient neighborhoods.

Total Element Objectives – 10

Total Element Action Items – 45

Principal Lead Agencies

Office of the Mayor-President

Office of the Planning Commission

Build Baton Rouge

EBR Housing Authority

Housing Element

The purpose of this element is to determine which housing types should be targeted to meet the needs of the City-Parish's population. If East Baton Rouge Parish cultivates a balanced housing mix that builds on emerging market dynamics, it will have a major competitive economic advantage over its peer cities.

Indicators

Mix of Housing Types

A goal of FUTUREBR is to encourage a balanced housing supply by supporting higher density in specified areas. Despite this, the majority of new residential construction continues to be single-family, reflecting current market demands.

	2018	2019	2020
Single Family	75%	87%	54%
Townhouse	1%	11%	7%
Condo/Apt	24%	2%	39%

Affordability of Housing

An increasing problematic trend in the United States is the percentage of "rent-burdened" or "rent-stressed" people.

Someone who is rent-stressed devotes more than 30-35% of their annual income to rent. The percentage of rent-stressed renters in Louisiana is higher than the percentage nationally. In Louisiana, 44.6% of renters devote more than 35% of their income to rent. The average rate in the U.S. is 42%.

The percentage of rent-stressed households in Baton Rouge is 42%, and the percentage of households who are extremely rent-stressed (over 50% of income devoted to rent) is over 27%. The majority of extremely rent-stressed households in Baton Rouge are located in North Baton Rouge and Gardere. On average, Baton Rouge residents have to work 15 eight-hour days just to pay off their rent for the month. (Louisiana Housing Corporation)

Location of New Housing

An action item in FUTUREBR is to “encourage development in downtown Baton Rouge, the City’s inner neighborhoods, and in transportation efficient locations across the City-Parish.” The marker we set was for 10 percent of new housing each year to be located within the Urban/Walkable character area. In 2020, only 5 percent of new housing was located within the Urban/Walkable character area. Almost all other residential development in the Parish was located within the Suburban character area.

	Single Family Residential	Townhouse	Condo/ Apartment	Total
Downtown	1	0	0	1
Urban	43	9	278	330
Suburban	758	96	280	1134
Rural	40	0	0	40

Accomplishment

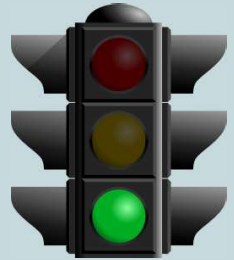
With the revival of Downtown Baton Rouge reaching its maturity, Downtown East has begun to see its own revival in recent years. When the Downtown Development District expanded its borders to include Downtown East, it had this exact goal in mind. With the success of The Elysian, a mixed-income mid-rise apartment complex, came a flurry of residential developments. Most recently, The Elysian II and III finished construction, adding much-needed affordable housing units within close proximity to Spanish Town. Soon to be constructed are the Motor City Apartments, a high density complex that makes great use of a transit-efficient block at the foot of Scenic Highway. With such an abundance of high-quality housing being built in Downtown East, the area is primed for continued revival.



The Elysian complex has proven to be a successful formula for adding affordable housing units in the downtown area.

AARP Livability Score
Housing Category
 Affordability and access

54



MOVING FORWARD

Key Accomplishments

Elysian III
 Motor City Apartments

PARKS AND RECREATION GOALS

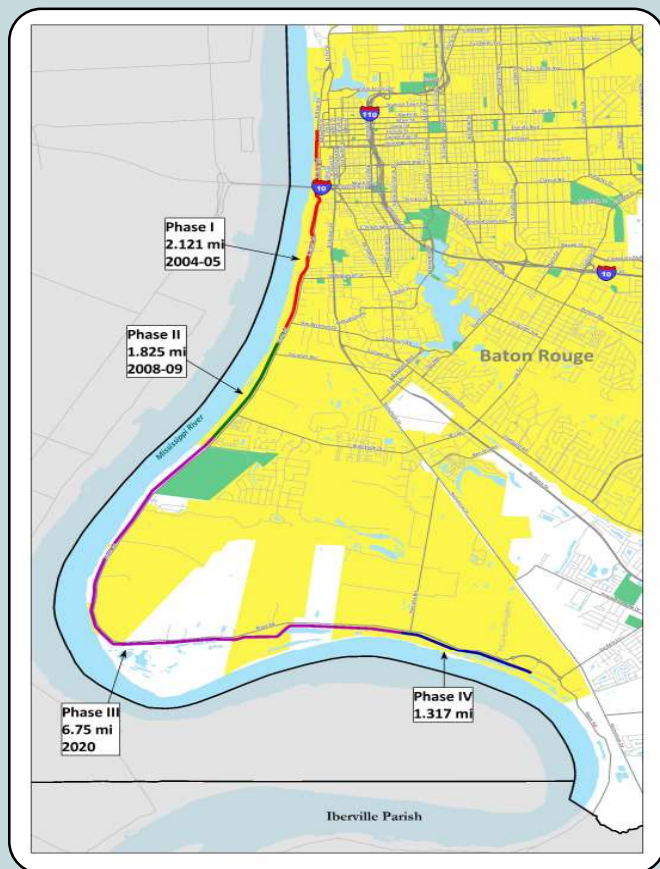
1. Increase quality of existing parks, access to parks and recreation facilities, and diversity of programs.
2. Improve and expand pedestrian and bicycle paths and trails to promote active recreation and to provide better connections to parks.
3. Expand the City-Parish's nature parks while providing educational and recreational opportunities to Parish residents.

Total Element Objectives - 7

Total Element Action Items - 27

Principal Lead Agencies

**Office of the Mayor-President
BREC**



River Levee Bike & Walking Path

Parks and Recreation Element

The purpose of this element is to establish programs for land and natural resource conservation and management, to promote BREC's priority actions. A high quality system of parks and recreation resources provides a multitude of community benefits: protecting our environment, preserving wildlife habitat, strengthening local economies, attracting new businesses, contributing to the local tax base, increasing property values, and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Indicator

Park Amenities and Walkability to Parks

The City of Baton Rouge is ranked in the 94th percentile for the number of basketball hoops and ranked in the 100th percentile for the number of recreation and senior centers. In addition to the number of park amenities, 53 percent of residents live within a ten minute walk of a park, just one percent below the national average. Fifty-nine percent of low income residents and 56 percent of children ages 0-19 live within ten minutes of a park.

Source: The Trust for Public Land ParkScore Index

Accomplishments

River Levee Bike & Walking Path Extension

A 12.013 mile levee path atop River Road stretches from Hollywood Casino in downtown to L'Auberge Casino and Hotel. Due to the scope and complexity of the project, the levee path was broken up into four phases. Phase I was completed in 2005 and runs from Lafayette Street to LSU at Skip Bertman Drive, totaling 2.121 miles. Phase II was completed in 2009 and runs from Skip Bertman Drive to BREC's Farr Park Equestrian Center, totaling 1.8 miles. Phase IV was runs from Ben Hur Road to L'Auberge Casino and Hotel, totaling 1.317 miles. Phase III of the project was recently completed and runs from BREC's Farr Park Equestrian Center to Ben Hur Road. Phase III of the levee paths connects the first two phases and closes the 6.75 mile gap of the path.

Greenwood Community Park & Baton Rouge Zoo Updates

The Greenwood Park and Baton Rouge Zoo Master Plan was approved in 2019. Phase I improvements are currently underway,

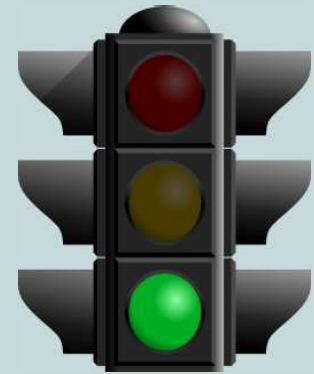
totaling around \$35 million. These funds will provide a signature adventure playground, a beautiful promenade along the Bayou, a green parking lot for the park and zoo, a new entrance building, new animal exhibits and care facilities, and updated infrastructure. Since the pandemic, the zoo has played a crucial part in providing physical and mental benefits of outdoor recreation. The improvements to the park and zoo will continue to contribute to the quality of life, health, and wellness of the parish.

BREC Park Improvements

The first goal of the Parks and Recreation element is to “Increase quality of existing parks, access to parks and recreation facilities, and diversity of programs.” As part of the Imagine Your Parks 2 Better Parks- Better Living 10-year strategic plan, BREC implements strategies for development and maintenance of various park amenities and greenspaces. There are currently eight community parks and 17 neighborhood parks with six special use facilities projects being conducted. Under the strategic plan, three community parks, 30 neighborhood parks, and four special use facilities projects have been completed. Some of these recent improvements include Forest Community Park and Woodlawn Acres Neighborhood Park. The Forest Community Park updates included a new play area, meeting and multi-purpose rooms, storage space heat and air conditioning, and a resurfaced gym floor. The Woodlawn Acres Neighborhood Park updates included a new playground, partial walking loop, cricket pitch and field and picnic shelter and pavilion. Both project improvements were completed in spring 2020.



Forest Community Park



MOVING FORWARD

Key Accomplishments

River Levee Bike & Walking Path in Phase 3
BREC Park Improvements
Greenwood Community Park and
Baton Rouge Zoo updates



Renderings of Greenwood Park and Zoo Phase I

ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION GOALS

1. Preserve and enhance environmental assets.
2. Protect watersheds, wetlands, and floodplains.
3. Improve and protect the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater.
4. Preserve and restore the tree canopy.
5. Improve air quality to meet or exceed national ambient air quality standards.
6. Protect, preserve and enhance land resources and natural features.

Total Element Objectives - 16

Total Element Action Items - 63

Principal Lead Agencies

Office of the Mayor-President

Environmental Services

Planning Commission



Cormorant birds make their annual visit to the Baton Rouge Lakes.

Environment and Conservation Element

The purpose of this element is to provide recommendations that will protect and conserve the environmental assets of the City-Parish and to foster a green, active, ecologically diverse and economically sound community.

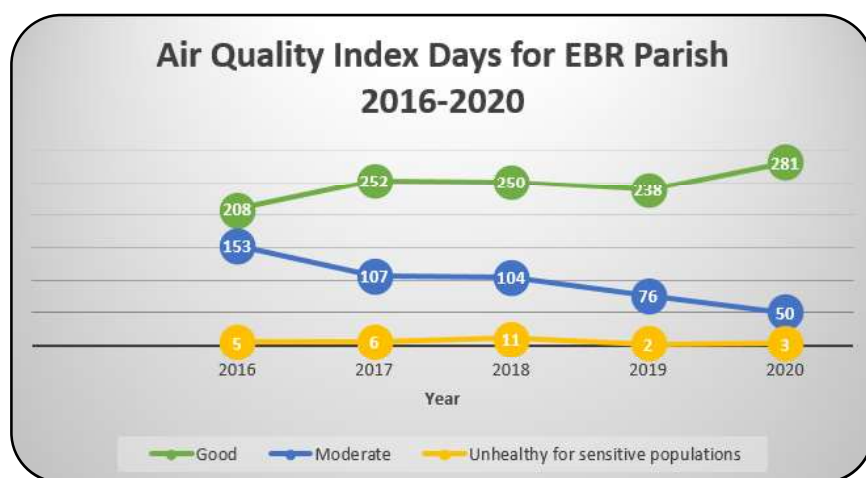
Indicator

Air Quality Index

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) compiles an annual summary of Air Quality Index (AQI) values for geographic areas that center on an urban place and adjacent areas that are socioeconomically tied to it by commuting. AQI takes into account all of the air pollutants measured .

As stakeholders in Baton Rouge minimize air pollutant emissions from mobile and stationary sources to reduce emissions, the AQI for the parish is steadily improving. The EPA has established five categories for daily AQI: Good, Moderate, Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups, Unhealthy and Very Unhealthy. As emissions are reduced, the number of days in the Good and Moderate categories will increase.

The chart below shows the data for the parish and the number of Good days has increased from 208 in 2016 to 281 in 2020. There were no unhealthy or very unhealthy days since we began tracking this data.



Source: Environmental Protection Agency <https://www.epa.gov/air-data>
Report generated November 30, 2020

Accomplishments

Stormwater Master Planning

The widespread flooding event of 2016 brought awareness of the vulnerability of the Parish to a changing climate. Clean water, protected floodplains and protection of natural features are East Baton Rouge issues that will be addressed in the Stormwater Master Plan. Phase I, Implementation Framework, has been completed and Phase II which will evaluate the watershed on a regional level is underway.

Tree Canopy

In 2016, the UDC was amended to allow credits to parking, landscaping, paving requirements and sidewalk locations for tree preservation. The result has been preservation of some very large, mature live oak trees in areas of the parish. Tree preservation, when done properly with best management practices, adds value to urban areas by:

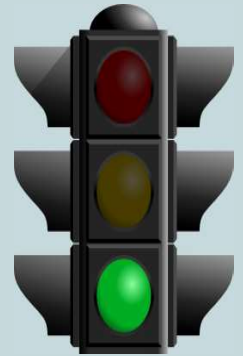
- mitigating urban heat effects
- capturing and slowing stormwater
- shading and cooling up to 20 degrees
- requiring a superior level of design
- offering habitats for other species such as birds
- maintaining a high quality of life



Live Oak trees at the Long Farm Development were properly preserved during construction by avoiding the dripline and using alternative pavement near the root system

AARP Livability Score
Environment Category
 Clean air and water

56



MOVING FORWARD

Key Accomplishments

Improved Air Quality
Water quality improvements
Tree Preservation



EAST BATON ROUGE
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
 UNDERSTAND. PLAN. IMPLEMENT.

INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS

1. Collect wastewater and provide effective treatment in an efficient, reliable, sustainable and environmentally sound manner.
2. Reduce the impact of flooding.
3. Improve the drainage system to improve water quality.
4. Public buildings should be sustainably constructed, strategically located and comprehensively planned.

Total Element Objectives - 16

Total Element Action Items - 42

Principal Lead Agencies

Building and Grounds

Environmental Services

Transportation and Drainage



A 50 foot 5G cell tower in the Tara Subdivision

Infrastructure

The purpose of this element is to provide an overview and assessment of the current City-Parish wastewater, drainage, drinking water and public buildings. The core values and aspirations of the Vision developed for FUTUREBR were used as the framework for developing recommendations for the City-Parish Infrastructure Element.

Indicator

Community Rating System

A goal of the Infrastructure Element is to “reduce the risk of flooding to existing and future structures.” A proxy for measuring the progress on this goal is the Parish’s score on the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Community Rating System (CRS). The CRS is a voluntary program for National Flood Insurance Program participating communities; the score is based on the measures the community has implemented to provide protection from flooding with the lower number reflecting more activities implemented to reduce the risk of flooding. Communities with a 1 rating have the strongest floodplain management initiatives. In 2019, East Baton Rouge Parish was classified as a 7, among the best in Louisiana.

Parish	CRS Score
East Baton Rouge	7
Terrebonne	7
Orleans	8
Lafayette	8
Ascension	8
Livingston	10

Broadband

High speed internet access at home is an essential part of everyday life for many City-Parish residents. While most homes in the parish do have access to broadband, approximately 1,500 households do not have access to broadband connections. FUTUREBR Housing Action Item 4.1.3 states “Ensure that every home has the infrastructure to connect to high speed broadband internet.” Both the city and the parish have seen a steady increase in broadband access for households. From 2017 to 2018, the city increased by 3.1% and the parish increased by 2.9%. From 2018 to 2019, the city increased by 4.7% and the parish increased by 3.6%.

	2017	2018	2019
City of Baton Rouge	72.6%	76.7%	80.4%
East Baton Rouge Parish	77.1%	80.0%	83.6%
United States	78.1%	80.4%	82.7%

Source: U.S. Census

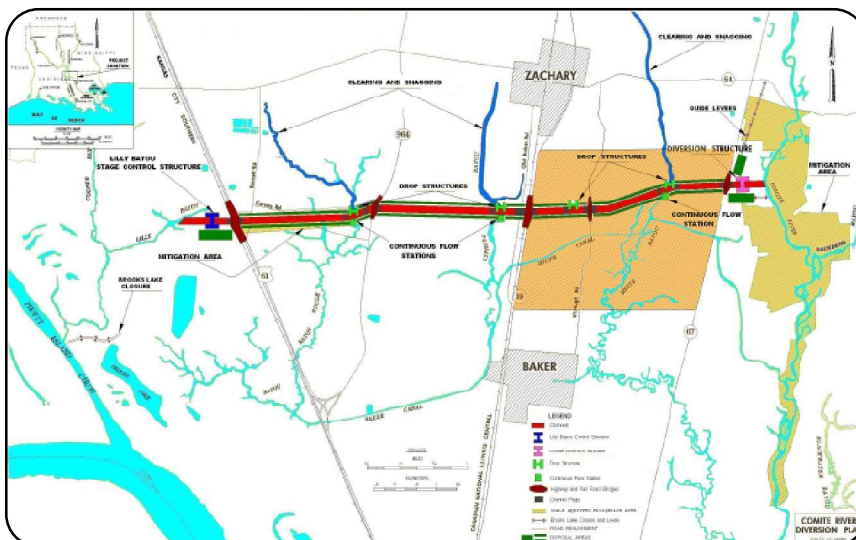
Accomplishments

MoveBR Green Infrastructure

All of the MoveBR cross sections have some green infrastructure component, such as rain gardens or flow-through planters. Green infrastructure will help minimize repetitive flooding and improve water quality. Currently, there are three projects in the construction phase and 18 projects in the design phase. In addition to green infrastructure implementation, \$150 Million dollars have been bonded to advance the MOVEBR Highway Infrastructure initiative. This program will help improve drainage along 50 city-parish roads.

Comite River Diversion Canal Project

The \$343 million Comite River Diversion Canal Project will consist of a 12-mile long diversion channel from the Comite River to the Mississippi River, control structures and other flood prevention features. The canal will help reduce the impact of flooding and provide urban flood damage reduction. Construction work has already started in the U.S. 61 area and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expects to award a \$80 million contract to dig out and build a 1.5-mile segment of the canal. The project is set to be completed by the end of 2021.



Comite River Diversion Plan



MOVING FORWARD

Key Accomplishments

MoveBR Green Infrastructure
Comite River Diversion Canal Project

EBR received nearly \$4 million from FEMA to develop Stormwater Master Plan

PUBLIC SERVICES GOALS

1. Provide efficient, effective, and coordinated services to the public.
2. Enable persons to have healthy and satisfying lives in a comfortable and safe natural environment.
3. Support an educational system which consists of academically and financially strong and stable schools.
4. Increase the sustainability of the Parish of East Baton Rouge and enhance the long term viability of the Metropolitan Statistical Area.

Total Element Objectives - 18

Total Element Action Items - 62

Principal Lead Agencies

East Baton Rouge Parish School Board

East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office

Information Services

MOHSEP

Office of the Mayor-President



The New River Center Branch Library

Source: Downtown Development District

Public Services Element

The purpose of this element is to address long term coordination with local, state and federal agencies. Coordinating policies, procedures, and information between agencies prevents duplication of services and efforts thereby ensuring efficiency of customer service and improving citizen access to these services.

Indicator

Graduation Rates

East Baton Rouge Parish school graduation rates increased by 1.9 percent from 2016-2017 to 2018-2019. Both the state and the parish have seen a slight drop in graduation rates from the previous year, with the state having a -1.3 percent change and the parish showing a -3.8 percent change from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019. However, the number of students who graduated on time reached a state record in 2019 at 42,650, up from 40,131. As the parish continues to strive for academically and financially strong and stable schools, the parish will see improvements in graduation rates.

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
East Baton Rouge Parish	66.7%	72.4%	68.6%
Louisiana	78.2%	81.4%	80.1%

Source: Louisiana Department of Education- Louisiana Believes

Accomplishments

The New River Center Branch library

The new state-of-the-art River Center Branch Library is a 48,490 square-foot, four-floor modern library with dynamic, collaborative spaces for all ages that opened in June 2020. The new library offers patrons new opportunities for learning, collaboration, and creativity. The library has dedicated floors for children, teens, and adults. In addition to traditional collections, the library provides meeting rooms for community members, conference rooms equipped with remote distance learning technology, media tech labs, and a foundation and grants center. The library structure is built to respond to the local climate with a shaded public plaza, trellised roof terrace, and large windows. Despite COVID-19 restrictions, the new library provides access to different forms of media and is vibrant community hub.

Jefferson Terrace Academy

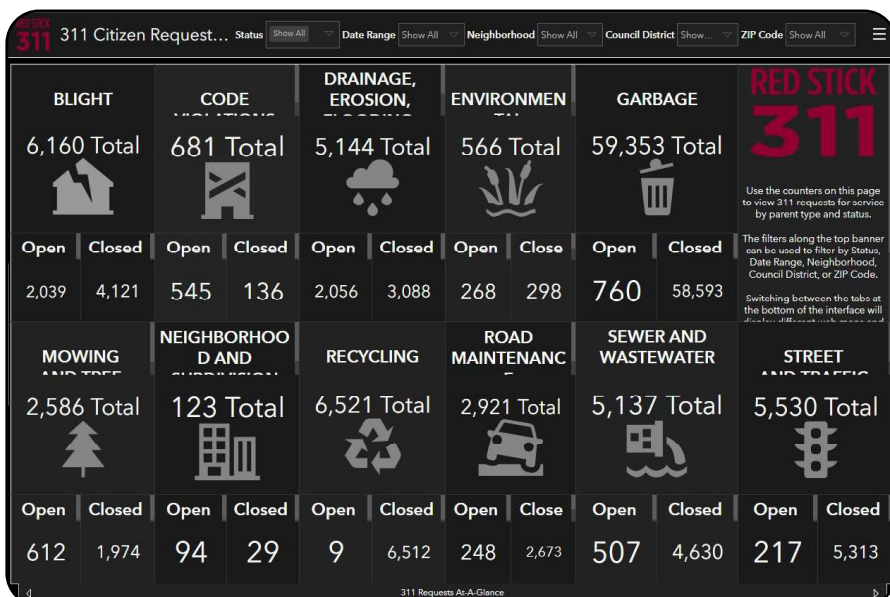
The sparkling new Jefferson Terrace Academy is a 125,000 square-foot, K-8 school that opened in fall 2020. The new school replaced the old Jefferson Elementary school and can hold more than 700 students. The school has returned to face-to-face instruction with a virtual learning option.

City-Parish's Inaugural Citizen Data Academy

The city-parish launched a free virtual citizen data academy led by technology and innovation experts that featured a three-part training series. The academy was designed to help Baton Rouge residents what City-parish data includes, where it is located, and how to use it to understand trends and improve quality of life in within the community. The academy gave an overview of open data and EBRGIS programs, how to create charts and maps and use various tools analyze data. This academy plays an integral part in equipping the public with the necessary skills to access and analyze public data.

Red Stick Ready 311 Dashboard

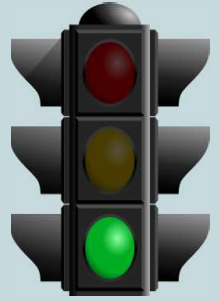
The Red Stick Ready 311 Dashboard is an online application that maps 311 service requests within the parish. The app displays the total entries for categories such as blight, code violations, environmental issues, and street and traffic issues within time frames ranging from the past week to year-to-date. The dashboard is useful for comparing all the categories' statistics in one view. The dashboard is just one of several interactive tools within the EBRGIS Map Portal banner gallery. This useful resource provides users with accurate, up-to-date data and encourages citizen engagement.



AARP Livability Score Engagement Category

Civic and social engagement

81



MOVING FORWARD

Key Accomplishments

The New River Center Branch Library

Jefferson Terrace Academy

City-Parish's Inaugural Citizen Data Academy

Red Stick Ready 311 Dashboard



Exterior of Jefferson Terrace Academy
Source: The Advocate

EBRGIS

OPEN DATA BR

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Coordinated by the Long Range Planning Division